

Christian Conservatives See Wins at Polls

✖ Christian conservatives saw several victories during Tuesday's election, including the repeal of Maine's gay marriage law.

Republican Chris Christie won a close governor's race in Democratic-leaning New Jersey, ousting incumbent Jon Corzine, while Bob McDonnell emerged a clear winner in Virginia's gubernatorial race, defeating Democrat Creigh Deeds.

Both Republican candidates are pro-life and support traditional marriage.

In Virginia, the other candidates who gained the support of the U.S. Reformation Prayer Network, led by Mike and Cindy Jacobs, also were elected. Republican Bill Bolling was re-elected lieutenant governor, and Republican Ken Cuccinelli won the race for attorney general.

In New York, however, conservatives lost New York's 23rd Congressional District. The race had been fraught with infighting over GOP nominee Dede Scozzafava's moderate views. She ultimately suspended her campaign and later endorsed Owens. for the first time in 150 years to Democrat Bill Owens.

National Republican leaders endorsed Conservative Party nominee Doug Hoffman, who, unlike Scozzafava, is pro-life and opposes gay marriage.

Republicans argued that the GOP gains Tuesday signaled what would happen in the 2010 congressional races. Independents, who split between Obama and Republican John McCain in last year's presidential race, voted almost 2-1 for the Republican candidates in Virginia and New Jersey, *USA Today* reported.

However, exit polls in Virginia showed that black voters and young people under 30 turned out in smaller numbers than they did last year.

Despite the New York defeat, several Christian groups said the election signaled a victory for conservative values.

"Conservative efforts on the ground finally gave a voice to the thousands of voters in the district who believe that life, marriage and fiscal responsibility all matter," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the pro-life group, the Susan B. Anthony List. "Without these people, no GOP candidate can win, in New York or elsewhere."

Mathew Staver, founder of Liberty Counsel and dean of the Liberty University School of Law, said the wins in New Jersey and Virginia were a wake-up call to those who pronounced the GOP dead.

"The dramatic triumph of conservative and pro-family values at the polls should send a message to all elected officials—the people want leaders who stand for limited government, lower taxes and family values," Staver said. "The people derailed the out-of-control freight train of the liberal Washington policies and politicians."

The big win for most Christian observers, however, was Maine voters' repeal of the state's gay marriage law, which was passed by the Legislature in May and signed into law by Democratic Gov. John Baldacci.

With 87 percent of precincts reporting Wednesday morning, the marriage referendum had gained 53 percent of the vote, making Maine the 31st state to affirm traditional marriage at the voting booth. Every state that has put marriage to a popular vote has opposed gay marriage.

"The institution of marriage has been preserved in Maine and across the nation," said Frank Schubert, the chief organizer

for Stand for Marriage Maine, according to the Associated Press (AP).

Gay marriage supporters, stung by the defeat, said they would continue to press for same-sex marriage, the AP said.

"We're not short-timers," said Jesse Connolly, campaign manager for No on 1/Protect Maine Equality, who held off conceding until early Wednesday. "We're here for the long haul and whether it's just all night and into the morning, or it's next week or next month or next year. We will be here. We'll be here fighting. We'll be working. We will regroup."

The five states that allow gay marriage—Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Connecticut—legalized the practice through legislation or court rulings. A bill to legalize gay marriage was introduced in Washington, D.C., last month and may be approved by the end of the year.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins joined a coalition of district pastors in calling on the district's elections board to allow Washington residents to vote on marriage in November 2010.

"We applaud Maine's voters for holding their elected leaders accountable," he said Wednesday. "We hope the message sent today by Maine's voters will be heard in Washington and state capitals around the nation. The institution of marriage should not be used to establish special rights for a select few at the expense of the natural family and future generations."

In a move many traditional marriage supporters opposed, voters in Washington state approved Senate Bill 5688, which expands the rights of same-sex couples within the state's domestic partner laws. The bill was passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Chris Gregoire earlier this year.